

AUTHORIZING A PER CAPITA PAYMENT TO MEMBERS OF THE MENOMINEE TRIBE OF INDIANS

JUNE 25, 1951.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State
of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. MORRIS, from the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs,
submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 3782]

The Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 3782) to authorize a per capita payment to members of the Menominee Tribe of Indians, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

The bill authorizes a per capita payment of \$150 to each individual on the rolls of the Menominee Tribe of Indians, Wisconsin. The payment will be made from tribal funds now on deposit in the United States Treasury. No appropriation of Federal funds is required.

The Menominee Tribe has built up in the Treasury certain tribal funds largely as a result of a logging and lumber industry on the reservation. The per capita payment will reduce the tribal funds by approximately \$450,000, leaving approximately \$2,200,000 in the Treasury in trust for the Menominee Indians.

Testimony indicated that although the tribal finances are, as a whole, in good condition, many individual Indians are in dire need of assistance. The committee therefore felt that a \$150 per capita payment is a moderate amount and will not in any way endanger their cash reserve. It was the feeling of some of the members of the committee that the per capita payment should be increased to \$300, but upon request of tribal officials, limited it to \$150.

The Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs unanimously reports and urges the passage of this bill.

The report of the Department of the Interior reads as follows: 633

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington D. C., June 25, 1951.

Hon. JOHN R. MURDOCK,
Chairman, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs,
House of Representatives.

MY DEAR MR. MURDOCK: This refers to your request for a report on H. R. 3782, a bill to authorize a per capita payment to members of the Menominee Tribe of Indians. The bill provides for the payment from the Menominee 4-percent fund of \$150 to each of approximately 3,000 members of the tribe.

I have no objection to the enactment of the bill.

The timber resources of the Menominee Reservation have made the Menominee Tribe practically self-sustaining. Tribal enterprises and other income finance practically all the reservation activities, such as education, health, law and order, and administration as well as the operating expenses of their tribal sawmill enterprise. By the selective cutting of timber, the Menominee Forest is managed on a sustained-yield basis, conserving this source of income for future generations. More than two-thirds of the Menominee Indians benefit from employment in the tribal enterprises.

All members, moreover, have an interest in the timber cut from the reservation. By the act of June 15, 1934 (48 Stat. 964), the Congress provided for the determination of the fair-market stumpage value of the fully matured and ripened green timber cut during each fiscal year, and for a per capita payment in like amount during the succeeding fiscal year, except that the per capita payment may not exceed the amount actually earned from timber operations during the previous year. This arrangement permits members who do not benefit directly through employment to share in the returns from the sawmill operation. Such per capita payments do not result in an impairment of the tribal capital, since the stumpage value of the timber sold is treated as a cost in determining the profits from the sawmill operation. During each of the past 7 years, the amount actually earned from timber operations has been substantially less than the stumpage value of the timber cut, and the annual per capita payments have averaged only \$31. At the same time the principal of the Menominee 4-percent fund has been increased through the retention of that portion of the returns from the sawmill operation which represents the stumpage value of the timber sold. During the 7-year period ending June 30, 1950, this conversion of the tribal timber into cash has increased the Menominee 4-percent fund from about \$1,200,000 to about \$1,600,000. In view of the foregoing, the Menominee Tribe feels that an additional per capita payment should be made to its members.

While credit is provided by the tribe for home building and for individual enterprises, some members have not been eligible for loans. A per capita payment of \$150 would permit them to make improvements to their homes and to purchase needed household furnishings. Others can make good use of this amount in replenishing equipment and in expanding farm programs.

Ordinarily I hesitate to recommend the per capita distribution of tribal funds, but I am not opposed to the sharing of assets when an Indian tribe follows a program that is economically sound. It is believed that the Menominee Tribe has such a program and that it would not be jeopardized by the withdrawal of \$450,000 from tribal funds for a distribution to members.

The Bureau of the Budget has informed me that there is no objection to the submission of this report to your committee.

Sincerely yours,

DALE E. DOTY,
Assistant Secretary of the Interior.